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Telegraphic Address:—"CO-PARTNERSHIP, LONDON."

# LABOUR ASSOCIATION

FOR PROMOTING

## Co-operative Production based on the Co-partnership of the Workers.

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# WHAT IS CO-PARTNERSHIP?
# WHAT CAN IT DO FOR THE WORKER?

CO-PARTNERSHIP is the system of carrying on business under which the worker shares in the results and the management of his own industry, and in the capital with which it is carried on. The position of the modern wage-servant is far from being such as can satisfy a thinking man, for he is, as a rule, merely an intelligent machine, wholly cut off from any share in the direction, the responsibilities, and the profits of his labour. If he has any small savings they are invested elsewhere, for he has seldom any inducement, or even opportunity, to employ them in the business at which he works. This is not a system which can bring out the best of a man, his intelligence, his zeal, and his sense of responsibility. On the contrary, it tends rather to make him dull, sluggish, and careless. Even those, and they are happily many, who resist this tendency, must desire a better system, in which they may take their part as men, and not as hired machines; in which they may themselves own a share of the capital they work with; and in which, instead of the constant conflicts between employers and employed, all may be workers together in their degree with a common interest in the results, and with an equitable and reasonable machinery for settling differences between them.

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To bring about this is what co-partnership can do for the worker. It does not require any great agitation, any violent change. Wherever a number of determined and earnest men are engaged in an industry thoroughly understood by them, they may put together their own savings, and get others to invest with them, and so start business on a Co-operative basis. The profits of a business in which every worker is interested should be larger than where they are working for mere wages, and thenceforth those profits, or at least a large part of them, go to labour. Divided among the workers in proportion to their wages, and given in the form of shares in the business, they will make the humblest toiler a partner, without any sacrifice on his part from his wages.

## PRESENT POSITION OF CO-OPERATIVE PRODUCTION.

IT is often asserted that while Co-operative Distribution is a success, Co-operative Production is a failure. This is not true. Apart from productive industries carried on by consumers' societies employing labour for wages, with or without a "bonus," **Labour Co-partnership* for August, 1898, was able to give the following figures of Co-operative Production for December, 1897, where the workers enjoy co-partnership, *i.e.*, share in the profits, *and own Share Capital.*

| | 1883. | 1893. | 1897. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Societies............ | 15 | 108 | 169 |
| Sales for the Year ............... | £160,751 | £1,292,688 | £2,714,346 |
| Capital (Share, Reserve, Loan).. | 103,436 | 639,884 | 1,180,906 |
| Profits.......................... | 9,031 | 67,663 | 137,506 |

In all the workshops where this profit to labour is allotted, the workers first of all received the full standard rate of wages.

It is true there have been failures, but they now occur less often, and the successes are more marked. New societies are constantly being started, consumers' societies are admitting their workers to co-partnership; while private employers and public companies are, in some cases, moving in the same direction.

The great difficulty in the past has been, not, as is often supposed, for working men to manage their own business, or to manufacture well, but to secure a market. This difficulty grows less year by year. Each new society finds in the established ones a source of help, and often a market for goods; while it improves their market

*The organ of Co-operative Production, Monthly, 1*d*.

in return. Every kind of progress in the country makes our form of progress easier. Men tend to be less and less satisfied to be mere wage-servants; more and more willing and anxious to take upon themselves the responsibilities, as well as privileges, of free but united action. We firmly believe that the next ten years will see a growth of our movement beside which that of the last ten will seem small.

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# THE LABOUR ASSOCIATION:

## ITS PRINCIPLES, OBJECTS, AND METHODS.

THE LABOUR ASSOCIATION was formed at the Derby Congress of Co-operators in 1884, "with the object," to quote the words of its chief founder, the late E. V. Neale, "of substituting in the busy world of industry **united concert for antagonistic conflict,** and thus making the ever-growing command over the powers of nature attained by man as conductive as they may be made to the well-being of the working masses, instead of leaving the wealth thus produced to be divided by a scramble."

Its appeals are addressed

(1) To the body general known as **Co-operators**;

(2) To the great bodies of workers associated in **Trade Unions** and **Friendly Societies**

(3) To the **General Public.**

To Co-operators the Labour Association says:—"Do not think that your work is ended when working people purchase their goods at Co-operative stores; your work is only begun. You must go on to organise in your own interests production as well as consumption and exchange. You must seek to accumulate capital in workshops and factories as well as in shops, by securing for yourselves a share in the profits of productive as well as of distributive industry over and above your wages. You must aim at winning for the workers, in each industry, a closer interest in that industry, by giving them a recognised place in the management of it.

"This can be and has been effected in many businesses already existing, whether carried on by workers putting their own savings together, or by employers willing to form a closer alliance with their employees. Co-operators should set the example to the world of capitalists by taking their employees into such partnership."

To Trade Unionists the Labour Association says:—"You must not be content with merely organising labour against capital, wage earners against wage payers; you must try and start businesses for yourselves collectively out of the funds you have accumulated.

**Fraternal industry is better than fighting,** however necessary that may have been in the past."

Members of Friendly Societies we ask to support our movement for promoting provident habits.

To the public generally the **Labour Association** appeals to interest itself in the great industrial community, and to help its peaceful development by encouraging businesses conducted on the above co-operative and equitable principles, rather than those conducted under competitive and inequitable conditions.

The **Labour Association** has promoted these objects during the last ten years by the following means:—

(1) Circulation of numerous leaflets and pamphlets.

(2) Lectures and Conferences. During 1897 over 300 Meetings were addressed by the Association's speakers on Co-operative Production.

(3) Exhibitions at the Crystal Palace and elsewhere.

(4) Giving advice to workers wishing to start workshops upon co-partnership principles.

(5) Disseminating information on the movement. It has now started a monthly organ, "**Labour Co-partnership,**" for the better propagation of its principles.

Those interested should send at once for a list of the Association's publications, which give full information concerning the principles it advocates, and the position of the Labour Co-partnership movement throughout the country.

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**Read "LABOUR CO-PARTNERSHIP," Monthly, 1d.**

**Post free for 1/6 per annum.**

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To advance the objects of the Association, the Committee desire the assistance of friends—(1) By helping to organise Meetings, Lectures, Conferences, Distribution of Literature amongst the Societies, Trade Unions, or Associations with which they may be connected; (2) By supplying the Committee with any information concerning Co-operative Productive Societies in their district; (3) By becoming subscribers to the Association's funds of any sum not less than one shilling per annum, 2/6 and upwards entitles subscribers to the Association's literature as it is published.

*For further particulars and Cards of Membership, apply to*

THE SECRETARY,
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TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
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